DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 300 898 EA 020 457

AUTHOR Rutherford, William; Foyle, Harvey C.
TITLE How To Develop an Effective Homework Program. Tips for Principals from NASSP.
INSTITUTION National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va.
PUB DATE Oct 88
NOTE 4p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
JOURNAL CIT Tips for Principals; Oct 1988

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Guides; *Administrator Role; *Assignments; Elementary Secondary Education; *Homework; *Principals; Reading Assignments; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Homework policies and guidelines are the topics outlined in this article. Homework policies should address the amount of homework and amount of school time available to do the homework. Guidelines for grading homework are also discussed. It is recommended that teachers should prepare a written description of homework practices for the principal. Examples of preparation, practice, extension, and creative homework are described by K-12 teachers. Their suggestions are directed at helping administrators to help teachers not only vary homework assignments, but also focus on each type of assignment. Four references are included. (SI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED300898

Tips for Principals from NASSP October 1988

How To Develop an Effective Homework Program

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Koerner

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 020 157

Tips for Principals from NASSP October 1988

How To Develop an Effective Homework Program

Policies and Guidelines

Given the importance of homework in the lives of students, school administrators must give it as much consideration as any other aspect of instruction or curriculum.

And, just as other aspects of the school curriculum have policies and guidelines, so should the homework program. Before these guidelines can be established, some questions must be asked.

There is no ideal time allocation for homework, but a policy should address:

- The amount of homework assigned by each teacher to each student. A daily 45-minute homework assignment for a particular class may seem reasonable unless a student receives a similar assignment each day from six other teachers.
- The amount of time available during the school day for students to work on homework.

A homework policy should establish time parameters for teachers and students regarding homework requirements. These parameters should be set in relation to the importance the faculty members assign to homework and the purposes they believe it should serve.

How should homework be graded or assessed? How should it be reflected in student grades?

Research has shown that teachers in the same school differ in how they assess individual assignments and how much homework contributes to student grades. Although some differences may be expected based on the nature of the subject taught, a policy or guidelines should be established to provide a basic framework for teachers.

Merely checking homework to see if students did it all, without checking the accuracy or quality of the work, has some serious drawbacks. It conveys to the students that the teacher is not really serious about homework and that it is intended more as busy work than as a learning experience. When homework is not checked for accuracy or quality and students are not given any feedback on their work, learning cannot be positively reinforced. Indeed, students may assume that poor quality work is acceptable.

However, not every assignment must be graded. Nor does all the checking have to be done by the teacher. With adequate information or guidelines, students can self-check many assignments; others might be checked by classmates. If the assignment is worth doing, it is worth some type of feedback.

Whether and how much homework should contribute or affect student grades is a question with no definite answer. If a teacher develops quality assignments that accurately reflect what the students know about a subject, and if these assignments are appropriately evaluated, they may justifiably contribute to grades. On the other hand, poor assignments or those not evaluated at all should not be considered.

Certainly homework should not be used as a means for inflating grades. Extremely easy or frivolous assignments made to guarantee student success and boost their grades should not be considered. At the same time, teachers should not refrain from lowering grades if students fail to complete legitimate homework assignments. Nor should they stop giving homework because students do not do it. Instead, they should look at the types of homework they assign and consider whether students believe the assignments are worthwhile or are simply busy work. Lower expectations will result in lower performance.

Many states or districts require that administrators regularly and systematically evaluate teachers' instructional methods, and that evaluation should include homework practices.

Each teacher should prepare a written description of homework practices for the principal. This description should address the issues presented above, plus any others that are a part of the school's homework policy. From these descriptions, the principal can determine if a teacher understands the school policy.

At a time when schools are pressured to improve, homework should not be allowed to persist as a relic of the past. There must be a deliberate, thoughtful decision about the purposes of homework and the faculty members and administrators must ensure those purposes are fulfilled in a way that best serves the educational needs of students.

This section was written by William Rutherford, associate professor in the college of education at the University of Texas at Austin.

Defining the Purpose of Homework

When it comes to homework assignments, teachers often confuse students by trying to have more than one purpose per assignment. Teachers must vary the types of homework assigned (Palardy, 1988), but they should still maintain a structure in homework assignments.

There are four general types of homework: preparation, practice, extension, and creativity (Lee and Pruitt, 1979). Each type has its own purpose. Teachers should make their homework assignments with one of those purposes in mind.

The following examples of preparation, practice, extension, and creative homework were made by K-12 teachers in a summer seminar (Foyle, 1988). Their suggestions should help administrators to help teachers not only vary homework assignments, but also focus on each type of assignment.

Preparation homework (getting ready before) helps students inform themselves about the next day's lesson. For example, a section of pages may be assigned prior to a social studies discussion. Then, students may be asked to:

- Write their own class discussion questions based on their reading
- Share materials brought from home that relate to the class lesson
- Complete a take-home open-book pretest that covers material from the upcoming lessons
- Bring magazine and newspaper articles about the next topic of study. These materials could then be used on a bulletin board.

Practice homework (doing again after) provides students with the needed review and reinforcement about material presented in a previous lesson. For example:

- After a grammar lesson, students write their own sentences and then label the various elements of these sentences
- After reading a story, students write a new logical ending to the story and explain why the ending is appropriate
- After studying a specific period of recent history, students ask their parents about their experiences, reactions to that time period
- After studying nutrition, students read the labels on a variety of foods at home and report their findings with regard to the fat content, salt, calories, etc.

Extension homework (going beyond) guides students so they expand on concepts that were taught in class. Various approaches to extension homework include:

- After studying a historical period, students write want ads for the newspaper of that time
- After reading a story written during a past period of time, students rewrite the story using modern English and a modern telling of the story's themes
- After studying a topic, students read an article or book about that topic and report findings to the class.

Creative homework (putting together) includes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This type of homework is inventive and resourceful. Students come up with their own ideas related to a class topic and then share those ideas with the class.

Several suggested creative homework ideas include the following. Students:

- Create a new invention that they would like to see made
- Create a comic strip that incorporates the lesson topic
- Make miniature buildings that reflect the architecture of specific time periods
- Formulate a new product that fills a human need and develop an advertising campaign for the product.

Teachers no longer need to feel like they are heading in all directions with their homework assignments. Administrators should provide some specific examples of the four types of homework and their purposes, and teachers should think about what the purpose of specific homework is before they assign it.

References

Foyle, H.C., and Bailey, G.D. "A Homework Guide: Winning the Game of Student Achievement." *Kappa Delta Pi Record*. Lafayette, Ind.: Kappa Delta Pi, 1985, 21 (3): 68-70.

Foyle, H.C.. "Homework Purposes and Ideas." Homework in Teaching Seminar, June 1988. The Teachers College, Emporia State University, Emporia, Kans.

Lee, J.F., Jr., and Pruitt, K.W. "Homework Assignments: Classroom Games or Teaching Tools?" *Clearing House*, 1979, 53 (1): 31-35.

Palardy, S. "The Effect of Homework Policies on Student Achievement." *NASSP Bulletin*, 72 (1988): 14-17.

This section was written by Harvey C. Foyle, professor in the college of education at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas.

Tips for Principals *is a bimonthly publication of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091. George W. Fowler, President; Scott D. Thomson, Executive Director; Thomas F. Koerner, Director of Publications; Carol Bruce, Assistant Director; Patricia Lucas George, Editor.*